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Religious Instruction

O F

C H I L D R E N

R E C O M M E N D E D.

By the Rev. JAMES STONHOUSE, M.D.

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Of all the Men we meet with, nine Parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their Education. It is that, which makes the great Difference in Mankind. The little, or almost insensible Impressions on our tender Infancies have very important, and lasting Consequences.

LOCKE on Education.

*Delightful Task! to rear the tender Thought,
To teach the young Idea how to shoot,
And pour the fresh Instruction o'er the Mind.*

THOMPSON'S Seasons.

The S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

L O N D O N:

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Religious Instruction

PARTE II. DA R. E. N.

The religious instruction of the young is
the object of the Christian religion, and it is
the duty of the Christian parent to see that
his children are carefully brought up in the
principles of the Christian Religion, and that
they are brought up in the love of God, and
of their Neighbour. The Christian Religion
is the only Religion which is true, and which
is the only Religion which is necessary for
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P R E F A C E.

THE too general Neglect of the religious Instruction of Children ought to engage the serious Concern of Parents; and indeed of all others, who wish well to the Happiness of the rising Generation, and the true Interest of Society: For unless Children are carefully brought up in the Principles of the christian Religion, they will be greatly deficient in their Duty to God, Themselves, and their Neighbour.—The christian Religion reaches the Heart, discovers it's Corruption, shews the Necessity of it's being cleansed from it's Defilements, and formed anew after the divine Image, points out the Means of correcting the Disorders of our fallen Nature, and teaches the Way to obtain a blessed Immortality thro' a Redeemer.

While so many polite, and even (in Respect to this World) useful Accomplishments, are carefully attended to in the Education of Children, how shall we account for the too prevailing Disregard to Religion, which is the most important Part of it? Many modern Christians have Reason to blush on comparing the present relaxed Mode of fashionable Education with the daily and pious Labours of our Forefathers, and the exact Discipline,

pline, which they maintained. They diligently instructed their Children in the Doctrines, and Precepts of Christianity, well considering, that little was to be expected from those, who were not properly brought up from their Infancy in the Knowledge and Practice of them.—Should not this Consideration likewise animate all Instructors of Children to endeavor to form their Hearts and Lives on the Principles, and Rules of the Gospel of CHRIST?—Surely it should: And then they may reasonably hope, that the Blessing of GOD will attend their Endeavors.

I could wish to recommend to those, who are desirous of setting about the religious Instruction of their Children in good Earnest, the attentive and frequent Perusal of Dr. Doddridge's Treatise ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN: * And I am the more solicitous to recommend it, as there they will find the Subject illustrated, and enforced on a Plan somewhat similar to this; and as I apprehend it may be greatly beneficial both to Parents, and Children, if it be not their own Fault.

I readily allow, that there are many Parents and Guardians, School - Masters and Mistresses, who have no Need of the Information contained in
this

* This is not only a very useful, but very cheap Book; (Price 1s.) and may be had at RIVINGTON's in St. Paul's Church-yard; or of the Country Bookfellers, as most of them send weekly for Books to their Correspondents in London.

this little Treat; but it must be allowed, on the other Hand, that there are many who have, and to whom (I hope) it may be useful; especially as it is written in a plain Style suitable to the Matter, and addressed personally. The Soul is of inestimable Worth; and our spiritual Interests are doubtless of much more Consequence, than our temporal: If therefore any Thing here suggested should excite in Parents, or others, a greater Solitude to promote the eternal Welfare of the Children committed to their Care; and be in any Degree instrumental in pointing out the Manner of doing it, the Design of this Publication will be fully answered: And it is "my Heart's Desire and Prayer" that, in this Age of Levity and Dissipation, it may conduce to so important an End.

*An Extract from a Sermon * of the late Bishop of
Sodor and Man, (Dr. WILSON) concerning
the Method of educating Children, preached at
the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in
the Charity Schools in, and about the Cities of
London, and Westminster.*

IT can never be an Objection against the Christian Religion, that *all Men*, so soon as the Gospel is preached to them, do not see the Truth, and close with it's most gracious Offers of Pardon and Happiness: For, if Men are not disposed to be serious; if they were engaged in sinful Courses; if they shun that Light, which would shew them to themselves; and despise those Means, which God has ordained for their Conversion; 'tis no Wonder they do not, nay, 'tis impossible they should, believe the Gospel.—And this comes to pass, not by any fatal Decree of God, but from an utter Indisposition to hearken to the Truth, and to see their Interest in it: It is occasioned also by a Custom of acting against Reason and Conscience;—by leading a Life contrary to Holiness; by grieving the holy Spirit of God, by which

* This is a very useful Sermon, and is printed in a Duodecimo Size, (Price 3d. or 20s. an Hundred) that well-disposed Persons might give them to poor Families.



which they had been sanctified; and making it their Choice not to see the Consequence of a Life spent in Ignorance and Sin.—For this Reason it is, that *Children* are the most proper Subjects of an *Education*, which regards another *Life*; before they have been suffered to grow wild;—before their Souls shall have been *polluted*, their Senses *depraved*, their Minds and Memories *corrupted*, by evil Principles, and evil Examples: For, when it is *thus* with them, we shall find it the hardest Thing in the World to persuade them even to *bear* what we have to say on the Part of *Religion*.—Whereas *they*, who have the Happiness of being restrained *betimes*, and trained up in the *Fear of God*, will “*bear and receive* with Meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able to save their Souls.”

It is a sad Condition indeed to be miserable without *knowing* it, and consequently without any *Inclination* to look out for *Help*. But is not this the Case of the greatest Part of Mankind? and ought not the *Cure* of the Malady to begin here? especially with Respect to those, who are professedly taken in Hand to be delivered from this State of *Blindness*, and *Misery*.—Should not this be the *first*, and *great* Concern to plant the *Fear of God* in the Hearts of Children *betimes*; particularly by endeavouring to make them *see* and *feel* the *sad State* they are in *without the Blessing of a Redeemer*: Thus

we shall lay a good Foundation for saving Knowledge. But, if *that* be neglected, the general Duties of the Christian Religion may be taught without Effect: And they, who hear them, may live in a *formal* Profession of Christianity all their Days, and die in a Condition not better, than that of Infidels.—In short, there is no governing the *outward* without first governing the *inward* Man. “Out of the *Heart*, saith our SAVIOUR, proceed evil Thoughts, Thefts, Fornications, Adulteries, false Witness, Blaspheemies.” (Mat. xv. 19.)—Now in Proportion, as we have the *Fear of the LORD* in us, there is more or less Room for any of these to enter.—May the blessed Spirit of God create in *ourselves*, and *our Children* clean Hearts, and implant in our Souls a Temper opposite to all these Enormities.

*An Extract from Archbishop TILLOTSON'S Six Sermons on Family Religion, and Education of Children, in Duodecimo, * Fourth Edition, Page 123; or Page 531, Sermon LII. Vol. I of the Folio Edition.*

TO all the Means we use, says Archbishop TILLOTSON; we must add our constant, and

* These six valuable Sermons may be had, in a Pocket Volume, at RIVINGTON'S, St. Paul's Church-yard, (Price 2s.)

and earnest *Prayers to God for our Children* that *his Grace* may take an *early Possession* of them, that He would give them virtuous Inclinations, and towardly Dispositions for Goodness, and that He would be pleased to accompany all our Endeavours to that End with his *powerful Assistance, and Blessing*; without which *all*, that we can do, will be *ineffectual*: Parents may *plant*, and Ministers may *water*, but it is GOD, that must give the *Increase*.—Be often then on your Knees for your Children. Do not only teach them to pray for themselves, but do you likewise, with great Fervour and Earnestness, “*commend them to GOD, and to the Power of his Grace*; which alone is able to sanctify them. Apply yourselves to the *Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift*: Beg his Holy Spirit, and ask *divine Knowledge and Wisdom* for them of HIM, “*who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not*.” Beseech Him to season their tender Years with *his Fear*, “*which is the Beginning of Wisdom*.” Pray for them, as ABRAHAM did for ISHMAEL, “*Oh! that ISHMAEL may live before Thee*.” Gen. (xvii. 18) *or in thy Sight, and Favour, and not be cast off.*

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Religious Instruction

CHILDREN Recommended.

THE religious Instruction of *Children* is of so much Importance to their Happiness, and to the Support of Religion, and good Order in the World, that it requires great Attention to *understand* it's Nature and Extent, and greater Diligence, and Resolution to *practise* it. It is a Duty so shamefully neglected by *most* Parents, and so ill perform'd by *many, who make a Conscience of it*, that there is Need of frequent Exhortation on this Head. It is therefore my Intention to suggest some *serious Advice* on this important Subject; and that it may have the more Weight, I would remind my Readers, that the Jews in the *old*, and the Christians in the *new* Testament, were *particularly commanded* to instruct their Children.

—In the *sixth* Chapter of Deuteronomy, * it is ex-

B presly

* In the 4th, and 5th Verses of the Sixth Chapter of Deuteronomy, MOSES had given the Israelites a
Summary

preſſly ſaid, “ Theſe Words, which I *com-*
 “ *mand* Thee this Day, ſhall be in thine
 “ Heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently
 “ unto thy Children, and thou ſhalt talk of
 “ them, when thou fitteſt in thine Houſe, and
 “ when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when
 “ thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.”
 And in the *ſixth* Chapter of the Ephesians,
 the Apoſtle has injoin’d Parents to “ bring up
 “ their Children in the Nurture and Admonition
 “ of the Lord.”—To render what I propoſe on
 this Subject more eaſily underſtood, and re-
 membered I ſhall divide it into Sections. •

SECTION I.

The Things, in which Parents ought *more*
eſpecially to inſtruct their Children.

As Religion *takes in ſo large a Compaſs*, I ſhall
 here hint only at the *principal* Things.

Children

Summary of Religion, as conſiſting in the *Belief* of one God
 and a *Supreme Love* to Him. He then *COMMANDS*
 them in the 6th and 7th Verſes to keep theſe Words in
 their *HEARTS*, to make them familiar to their Minds,
 and the *Subject* of their frequent ſerious *Reflections*, and
 alſo to *teach* them diligently to their *Children*, to take *e-*
very Opportunity to inculcate on them the *Principles* of
 Religion, and to urge their *Practice* of its *Duties*. This
 is agreeable to the *Command* in the *new* Teſtament, that
 Parents ſhould “ bring up their Children in the Nurture and
 “ Admonition of the Lord,” (Eph. vi. 4.) May every Pa-
 rent well weigh theſe very important *Commands*!

Children are to be early *instructed* in the *Nature* of their *Souls*, as distinct from their *Bodies*, and as possessing Powers and Capacities *superior* to their *Bodies*, as *spiritual* Substances of unspeakable Worth, and of an immortal Duration—that the Body is to die, that the soul is to live for ever, and to be happy in Heaven, or punished in Hell.—They are to be *instructed* in the *Nature* of the great God, his Being, Perfections, and Providence; especially his OMNISCIENCE, his perfect *Knowledge* of all Things; his JUSTICE in rendering to every Man according to his Works; his GOODNESS to all Mankind, and his PECULIAR FAVOR to *them*, that love Him: I say they are to be *instructed* in these *Perfections* of God, as these are particularly adapted to *impress* the Minds of *Children*.—They are likewise to be taught the *Difference* between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice; the respective *Nature* and Consequences of *each*, both with Regard to *this*, and a *future* Life: that, if they are *good*, they will, through the *Mercy* of God, and the Merits of CHRIST, be rewarded in Heaven; and that, if they are *bad*, they will be cast into a Place of Misery and Torment. They are to be informed that the Scriptures are a Revelation from Heaven, given by the Inspiration of the holy Spirit.—They are to be taught the Doctrines and *Ordinances* of CHRIST, as a divine *Teacher*, and his Love, and Grace in dying for the Sins of Men, as a *Saviour*.—A general plain View of the *Scheme* of *Redemption* by

our Lord JESUS CHRIST should frequently be given them, and the Duties, which he requires of his Disciples, should be laid before them.—It is the Business of Parents to lead their Children to an high Esteem for the *Word of God*, and religious Ordinances, to a due Sense of the Vanity of the World, and an earnest Solicitude about the Salvation of their own Souls.—And it will be proper and necessary to give them frequent *Views* of the Relations, and Circumstances in Life, in which they are, or may be placed, and of those Duties which, in Consequence of these, are incumbent on them.

SECTION II.

The MANNER, in which Parents should instruct their Children, recommended to their Consideration.

I. *Your Instructions should be plain and easy.*

You must teach them only plain Things, and in a familiar *Manner*.* You are frequently to make these Things the Subject of your common Discourse with them, and speak of them, as plainly and familiarly, as you would of any Thing else you want them to learn, or to do. This the Apostle St. PAUL figuratively expresses by “feeding them with Milk, and not with strong Meat, which they are not able to bear.” (1. Cor. iii. 2.)—The *Capacities* of Children are

to
* Children should be particularly taught this plain Rule, “Whatsoever you would, that others should do to *you*, do *you* so to *them*,” and their Actions should be examined by it.

to be consulted, and Parents should suit their Exhortations to them. In this View such Books should be put into their Hands, on religious Subjects, as are plain, practical, and easy to be understood: For Children never learn any Thing with Pleasure which they do not understand: Nor are they likely to be impressed with, and retain what is *above* their Capacity. It is proper, in *instructing* them, to use such Expressions concerning the Things of God, as are taken from the Things of *Men*, and to endeavour to make them *understand* every Thing they learn.

2. *Your Instructions should be given mildly, and cheerfully.*

They should not be given with a magisterial Air, or in the Way of a *solemn Lecture*; where the Hearer is kept, as it were at a Distance, and not allowed to propose, or to answer Questions. All angry or threatening Expressions are at this Season carefully to be avoided. And never can that *Caution* of the Apostle be more necessary, "Fathers provoke not your Children to Anger," (*Eph: vi. 4.*) lest they should be discouraged. When *Instructions* are delivered with a dogmatical Air, an austere Aspect, and attended with Threats, Children are terrified, and discouraged from attempting to learn, and remember them. Let your Children see, that you take *Pleasure* in *instructing*,

them. A mild Speech, and cheerful Countenance are perfectly consistent with great Seriousness of Spirit, and with keeping up a proper Authority. Let them see, that all your Advice proceeds from *Love*. Let Nothing rough, and morose appear in your *Instructions*; but shew all Gentleness, which will give Weight, and Influence to every Thing you say.

3. *Your Instructions should be frequent, and short.*

Great Care must be taken, that their Memory be not burdened with any Thing long and tedious. *Short Instructions* are best suited to the Imperfection of their Reason, and the Weakness of their Memory. Let no Day pass, in which your Children shall not hear Something of Religion immediately addressed to them, and endeavour to graft some Hints of Advice and Instruction on *proper* Objects and Occurrences; especially on *those* which are peculiarly striking, and remarkable. Every Day remind them either of some historical Passage, or some Promise, or Threatening in Scripture. Besides these occasional *daily* Hints; *Sunday Evenings* ought to be *devoted* to this important Work. You should then not only read the Scripture, and Books of practical Religion to your Families, but talk familiarly to your Children concerning what they have been hearing at Church, and endeavor to fix divine Truths in their *Memories*, and in their *Hearts*. These frequent

frequent short *Instructions* are in Effect recommended by the Prophet Isaiah in the following Words, “ *Whom shall He teach Knowledge?* “ and *whom shall He make to understand Doctrine?* them, that are weaned from the “ Milk and drawn from the Breasts: For “ Precept must be upon Precept; Precept upon Precept; Line upon Line, Line upon “ Line, here a little, and there a little.” (*Isai.* xxviii. 9. 10.)

4. *Your Instructions should be given with great Seriousness, so as to shew, that your own Hearts are affected, with what you teach your Children.*

LET not your Instructions be given in a *formal* Way, as if it were a *Task*: But let them see, that you speak out of the Abundance of your Hearts what you know and feel, relish and love. Never mention the Name of God before them without the profoundest Veneration, that they may see you reverence and fear Him. When you speak of the Worth of the Soul, and the awful Solemnities of Death, and Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, let them see by the Seriousness of your Countenance and Manner of Address, that you are sensible of *your own* Concern in these Things. When you speak of the Love of God, and of Christ, there should be such a deep, and grateful *Sense* of it in *your own* Hearts, that they may perceive you are impressed with it. They will be likely to feel, when they see, that *you* feel.

View

View them as immortal Souls allied to the Father of Spirits, and as committed to *your* Care. Tell them how *solicitous* you are for their Welfare, and let them see by the Earnestness, with which you address them, and pray for them, that you really *are* so. You will thus secure your Interest in their *Hearts*; and they will attend and learn with Pleasure, when they perceive, that you are greatly concern'd in the Success of your Address to them.

5. *Your Instructions should be suited to their natural Temper, which ought therefore to be carefully observed.*

Every wise Husbandman considers the *Nature* of the Soil He is to cultivate, that He may manure and sow it accordingly. Those, who are to cultivate the Mind ought to be peculiarly studious, that their *Instructions* should be proper, and seasonable. To consult the Temper, and to keep a watchful Eye over the Conduct of Children is undoubtedly the Duty of Parents: For one Child may be preserv'd by that Behaviour of it's Parents, which may destroy another. Labour to root out every vicious Disposition, as soon as you perceive it. Caution them against those Miscarriages, by which you see them in Danger. Point out to them those Texts of Scripture, which forbid such Things, and require the contrary Behaviour. Set before them the Examples of
pious

pious Children and Youth, who have avoided such Sins, and have been eminent for the opposite Virtues. There is frequently as much difference in Children's *Minds*, as in their *Faces*. And *observing* Parents may easily know what their prevailing Disposition is; especially if they will take Notice of their Behaviour to one another, particularly at their Play; of their Behaviour to Servants, and other Inferiors, and suit the Instructions accordingly. Level all your Force against the Sins, which most easily beset them, and endeavour to persuade and engage them to abstain from all *Appearances* of Evil.

6. *It is necessary to add, that your Instructions should be given with an humble Dependence on the Grace, and Spirit of God.*

“ God formed the spirit of Man within Him, “ and teaches Him Knowledge.” He knows how to influence, and work on the human Mind to urge it forward, or to restrain it. Pray therefore daily to the Father of Lights, that He would follow your Attempts to teach your Children with his *Blessing*, that He would give them tractable Minds, and make them willing and obedient: It is in vain for you “ to plant and “ water, unless God give the Increase.” Pray earnestly for your Children every Time you bow your Knees before the LORD in Secret; and especially in your Families: Let them perceive, that
you

you do this with a most tender Concern, and deep Seriousness, which will be likely at once to *impress* their *Hearts*, and to draw down a divine *Blessing* on them: For there are many gracious *Promises* of God's Readiness to hear Prayer, and particularly to pour down his Spirit on the Children of his faithful Servants.

SECTION. III.

Motives to induce Parents to the religious *Instruction* of their Children.

1. *The religious Instruction of your Children, (as there is great Reason to hope) will be profitable to them.*

This is a *Motive* to attempt it. On this *Principle* you act every Day in common Life: You plough, and sow, work, and trade in Hope of Profit. And you have an agreeable Prospect of Success in endeavouring to form the Minds of your infant Offspring to Knowledge, and Goodness.

For *consider that their Minds are tender, and impressible*; pliable, like Wax, and ready to receive any Impression.—They come into the World perfect Strangers to every Thing in it, and they have so many new Objects to contemplate, so many new Ideas to receive, that the Mind is easily struck. The great *commanding Principles* of our Natures, HOPE and FEAR, soon influence

influence them, and many *religious Motives* are addressed to these *Affections*. They are open to Sentiments of Gratitude and Kindness: A little Favor obliges them, and it is easy to graft on this some general Love of God, and a Sense of the Obligations they are under to Him. These *Impressions* will be deep and strong in Proportion to the Apprehension, which Children have of the Importance of the Things they are taught, and the *Influence*, which the *Instructor* has over them. Solomon's Advice concerning *Correction* may be applied to *Instruction*. "Instruct thy son, "while there is Hope," (*Prov. ix. 18.*) while the Mind is tender, and good Impressions may easily be made.

Consider further, that the Minds of Children are less influenced by Prejudice than the Minds of those in the Advance of Life, and less liable to be biassed by a wrong Judgment concerning Persons and Things, formed without Evidence and Examination. : For long Commerce with the World indisposes Men for the Reception of *divine Truths*, and thus obstructs the Acquisition of the most important Knowledge. The Mind of a Child lies quite open to Conviction, and receives religious *Instruction* (prudently, and gently given) without any secret Dislike. And, if Parents behave well to their Children, they will regard and reverence what they say. Children have not those Prejudices against Religion, which a *wrong Education*, *bad Examples*, and *Satan's Devices* excite in

in the Minds of those, who are *grown up*. The natural Curiosity, and Desire of Knowledge, which God has implanted in the human Mind, begin to work *early*, and are very encouraging Circumstances. Where the Cultivation of the Mind has been neglected in *Childhood*, there are innumerable Weeds to be pulled up before any good Seed can be sown. But with Regard to *Children*, the Way is clear, the Soil open, and free, tho', on Account of the Depravity of human Nature, not so kindly, as could be wished.

Consider further, that *they are less inflamed by irregular Appetites and Passions*. Though the Harmony of human Nature, and the regular Subordination of it's Powers are by man's Apostacy from God much lost; yet, it is a considerable Time before irregular Passions begin to work. It is not in *Childhood*, that the most dangerous sensual Appetites, the Love of Money, and some other irregular Passions begin to be predominant. That Children are in general free from those Passions, which would obstruct their Progress in Knowledge and Goodness, seems evident from these Words of our Saviour, "Except ye be converted, and become, as *little Children*, ye, cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;" And from what the Apostle says, "In Malice be ye *Children*." (1 Cor: xiv 20.) It is true indeed we perceive Children *early* under the Influence of *Pride*, and *Ambition*: But this is generally owing to the *Folly of their Parents*

Parents and Instructors: And, where this is the Case, these Passions of Pride, and Ambition may be made the *Means*, or *Instruments*, of promoting the *Improvement* of such Children in Wisdom and Religion: For they may be made *ambitious* to excel others in what is *truly-valuable* without despising them, and without being *vain* of their own Superiority. The *Work of Education* is in general *too long* delayed: And to *this* must be imputed *principally* the Growth of those Passions, which hinder them from receiving Instructions. Parents, should be solicitous to secure their own Authority, and the Obedience of their *Children*, from their Infancy: And if *that* Time be improved, the *rest* of their Education will be comparatively *easy*. It is evident, that those Impressions, which are *first* made on the Mind, will be likely to *continue*; and those Admonitions, which are inculcated by the Instruction and Example of wise and affectionate Parents, will have an *abiding* Effect. It is on this *Principle* Solomon's Exhortation is founded, "Train up a Child
" in the Way He should go; and when He is
" old, He will not depart from it." (*Prov.* xxii. 6.)

2. *The religious Instruction of your Children will be much to your own Comfort.*

It is evidently the *Command* of God in Scripture, as well as the plain *Dictates of Reason*, that you should *instruct* your Children; and
C the

the Discharge of any Branch of Duty is attended with present Pleasure. The Mind enjoys Satisfaction in performing any Part of the Will of God. Your natural Love to your Children makes it pleasant to you to do any Thing, which may promote their real Interest. It lessens the Fatigue of your daily Business to think, that you are contriving the Good, and employed for the Support of the Family, which God has given you, and that you may be able to furnish your *Children* with those Means, and Accomplishments, by which they may subsist, and be useful and honourable in the World: But to *instruct* them in *Religion* will afford you, if you are wise, *peculiar* Pleasure, because in doing *this* you are labouring to cultivate their *Minds*, to improve their *Understanding*, to form their *Conduct*, to enrich their Souls, and thus leading them to the *Love*, and *Favor* of God, and laying a *Foundation* for their *eternal* Happiness. What a Satisfaction will it be to find them attending to your *Instructions* with Diligence and Seriousness? and this they generally speaking will do, if you give them in the *Manner* afore-mentioned. But your greatest Comfort will be to see (as I hope and believe you will) the good *Effects* of your Instructions: To observe them thoughtful about Religion, and their Souls, careful in reading, diligent in attending public Worship, watchful to observe the Sabbath, shunning Temptations to sin, avoiding evil Company, and fearing the Lord from their Youth, will afford you substantial Heart-felt
Pleasure

Pleasure. Your Joy will increase, when you see them fixed in useful Stations, improving and practising the *Instructions* of their Youth, and taking the same pious Care of *their* Children, as you took of *them*: For, as Solomon observes, “a wise Son maketh a glad Father.” (Prov. x. i.) “My Son, if thou be wise, my Heart shall rejoice, even mine.” (Prov. xxiii. 15.) And good men have no greater Joy, than to see, that “their Children walk in Truth.” (2 John. 8. 4.) It will support, and comfort you on a dying Bed to think, that you have left useful Knowledge and Religion, as a sacred *Entail* on your Posterity; and that, tho’ you may not be able to leave them much *worldly Substance*, you have through the divine Blessing, left such *Principles* and *Dispositions* in their *Heads*, and *Hearts*, as will never be lost, but will carry them safely through this dangerous World, and (thro’ the Riches of divine Grace) secure their eternal Felicity.

3. *Further, the religious Instruction of your Children will tend to support Piety and Virtue in the World.*

All good men are desirous to contribute their Part to this. They will be solicitous to exert their utmost Ability to restrain increasing Iniquity, and to support the Cause of Religion: They will, labour and pray, that “one Generation may arise, and declare God’s mighty Works unto another” and that CHRIST may still have a

Seed to serve Him in the midst of a crooked, and perverse Generation. Now *how* is this important *Effect* to be produced, but by religious *Instruction*? Is not the Want of a good Education the principal Cause of the Abounding of Ignorance, Profaneness, and a stupid Neglect of Religion? *Many* Parents (I fear *most* of them) take *no Pains* to instruct their Children in the Knowledge, Fear, and Love of God, neglect to *catechize* them, and mispend in Idleness, and Amusements that Part of the LORD's Day, which ought especially to be employed in this Work. Hence so many ignorant, untractable, sensual Youths in every Town, and Neighbourhood.—Hence many, who well understand Trades, and the common Business of Life, are quite *ignorant* of the Scriptures, of their Guilt, and Danger, as Sinners, and the Method of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST. To this *Ignorance*, it is in a great Measure owing, that God's Name is profaned, that his Ordinances are despised, and that a Regard for every Thing, manly, grave, and serious is quite destroyed by the *Love of Pleasure and Dissipation*, which is the peculiar Characteristic of the present Age. In Order to correct this growing Degeneracy a religious *Education* is necessary. *Here* a general Reformation must *begin*: Youth must be *well instructed*, in the *Principles* of Religion; carefully restrained from the Paths of Vice and Folly, and the Interest of their Souls *chiefly* consulted in the Disposal, and Settlement of them, and then
(but

but not 'till then) we may justly hope, that the *next* Generation will be better than *this*; that the Knowledge of God, and CHRIST will prevail in it, that Religion will become more general, and fashionable, and spread through succeeding Generations. Thus will God be glorified, the Credit of the Gospel be promoted, and all, who are Well-Wishers to the Happiness of Mankind, will see this, and rejoice in the Prospect.

4 Moreover—*The religious Instruction of your Children will be the most likely Means to promote their Happiness in this World, and in the next.*

There cannot be a more detestable Character, than that of a Parent, who is without *natural Affection*. And can *that* be called the *natural Affection* of a rational Creature, which extends only to the *Bodies*, and not to the *Souls* of his Offspring? Surely they have neither the Faith of *Christians*, nor the Reason of *Men*, (but are indeed like *Brutes*) who take no Care of their Children's *Souls*, give them no proper Instruction, no just Notions of *God*, of Themselves, or Eternity. Consider your Children, as intended to be Members of Society, and to fill up some Station in the World: and consider them especially, as related to the World of Spirits, and intended for an eternal Existence: You will then soon see, that their Happiness greatly

depends on a good *Education*. Without *this*, they are likely to continue ignorant, and insensible, destitute of good *Principles*, the Sport of their own Appetites and Passions, and the Prey of every Temptation. No Accomplishments, with which you can furnish them, will make them truly happy, unless the *Fear of God* rule in their Heart. No *other* Principle will keep them firm to their Duty, and make them uniformly and steadily good. Nothing *else* will render them desirable Husbands or Wives, Masters or Servants, honest Tradesmen, or diligent Workmen. Or if they behave tolerably, while in these Relations, so as to avoid the Censure of *Men*, they will not be approved of God without this *inward* Principle. Without *this* they must be Strangers to the *Pleasures* of Religion, to the *Joy* of a good Conscience, to an *Interest* in CHRIST, and to a well-grounded *Hope* of eternal Glory. Let it be further considered, that if Parents do not *properly instruct* their Children, if their *Education* be neglected, no *other Means* will be likely to influence them. There is little Hope, that they will be profited by the Prayers, and Discourses they may hear at Church: For, not being taught at Home the *Principles* of Religion, they can scarcely understand the plainest Sermons, and most forcible Exhortations, but attend public Worship without Edification. Hence they are easily "tossed about by every Wind of Doctrine," having no *spiritual* Discern-

cernment, and consequently the most useful *Ministers* often (to their great Concern,) labour in vain. They will likewise be discouraged from learning, when they *grow up*, because no proper *Foundation* was laid in their *Youth*. Whereas "it is good for the Soul to be *early filled with Knowledge*." Its Faculties will *then* be *spiritually* exercised, and it will easily *distinguish* Good, and Evil. This is necessary to prevent your Children from being seduced by the Errors of *Popery*, the Profelytes to which are generally the ignorant, and untaught. Besides, if you diligently *teach* them the *Commandments* of God, they will be likely to *adhere* to them. *These* will follow, and restrain them, wherever they go, and may *recover* them to their Duty, if at any Time *drawn aside* from it. But it is probable, that they will persevere in their Duty, and grow stronger and stronger. Their Characters will brighten, their Graces improve, their Comforts abound; and they will be enabled through CHRIST to look into Eternity without Dismay: And you will have a cheerful Hope, that you shall meet them in Glory, and be for ever with *them*, and with the Lord: and surely no *Motive* can be more powerful, than *this*, to engage you to comply with what I have here suggested;

SECTION.

SECTION IV.

General Advice to Parents, and a short Exhortation to Children.

1. *Let me, in an Affair of so much Importance, advise you, who are Parents, not to neglect the religious Instruction of your Children.*

Gratitude to God, “ who setteth the solitary “in Families,” and whose Heritage Children are,” requires *this* of you. He has expressly, strongly, and frequently *commanded* this, and *promised* his Blessing to it. The Lord JESUS CHRIST, to whose Grace and Love you are infinitely obliged, will be pleased with your Care in “feeding his Lambs,” and his Example in the tender Notice He took of little Children, and his blessing them, would be an *additional* Engagement to this. A Regard to *their* Happiness, and your *own*, concur to *enforce* this Duty. Let them be taught to read distinctly and carefully: Hear them read the Scripture, and practical Books *Yourselves*: Explain to them *what* they read to the best of your Judgment; and do Something of this every Day: for so the Law of God, commands, and the * Command is directly levelled against

* The Command is “ These Words, which I *command* “ thee this Day, shall be in thine *Heart*, and thou shalt “ teach them diligently unto thy Children, and thou “ shalt talk to them, when thou sittest in thine House, “ and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deut. vi. 6. 7.)

that common, but trifling, *Excuse* for Neglect of this, that you have not *Time*: For there is scarcely a Day, but you have Opportunity to talk to them, either in the House, or, by the Way, lying down, or rising up. See, that you enforce, and recommend all your *Instructions* by a good *Example*; and “do not (as a celebrated Writer * expresses it) point out to “them the Way to Heaven by your good “Counsel, and lead them by the Hand in the “Way to *Hell* by your bad Example.” If you neglect this weighty Care, you will find the bad *Consequences*, and eat the Fruit of your own Neglect. They will probably be a Disgrace to your Families, a Nuisance to the Neighbourhood, useless or corrupt Members of Society: They will spread the Contagion of Vice still wider; and, if ever God opens your Eyes to see the Worth of your own Souls, your Neglect of theirs will wound your Hearts, and that, together with their ill Behaviour, will bring down your grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave. And think (oh! think, ere yet it be too late) what a dreadful Meeting you will have with them at the Judgment Seat, of CHRIST, when you must answer for the Neglect of their Souls, and your Punishment will be increased in Proportion to the

Warnings

* See Abp Tillotson's Six Sermonson Family Religion, and the Education of Children: The fourth Edition in Duodecimo Page 99: Or the fifty first of his Sermons in the Folio Edition Vol. I. Page 531.

Warnings you have slighted, and the Opportunities you have disregarded.

2. *Let me further advise you (as it is your truest Wisdom) thankfully to accept, and improve whatever Helps you have for the religious Instruction of your Children.*

The Church sensible of the great Importance of this Duty, requires its Ministers to catechize the Children of their respective Parishes. Sorry I am, that it is in too many Places so much neglected, or performed in so superficial a Manner, as not to answer the End proposed by it. But one Reason of this Neglect may be, that Parents will not send their Children to be catechized; and when they do, they take no Pains to second public Instructions at Home. If Ministers are willing to exert themselves for your Children's Good, it is a very ungrateful, and unjustifiable Conduct towards them, as well as an Injury to your Children not to require and oblige them to learn their Catechism, and to attend on the public Instructions in it. There have been, and still are some in the exalted Stations of Life, who have made Conscience of having their Children thus publicly catechized in the Church, which is a very laudable Example, and has been instrumental in causing the like Attendance in others. And it would be highly commendable and beneficial, if all (especially

ally those in the higher Rank) would act in the same Manner. For in the House of God, "the rich and the poor meet together:" Their *Souls* are equally valuable and immortal, and *both* of them need Instruction. Besides, there is a *peculiar* Reason to expect the divine *Blessing* to attend *public* Instruction. The Solemnity of the Day, the Place, and the Congregation are adapted to *impress* it on *young* Minds.* Every *faithful* Minister will discharge *this* Duty; and it will be an *Encouragement* to Him to see his *People* *thankful* for his friendly *Attempts* of this Nature, and careful, that their *Children* should gain all possible *Advantages* by them; and their public Attendance on such Instructions will increase their Esteem and Affection for a *Minister*, who diligently *endeavours* to instruct them, and will *dispose* them to receive, and profit by all his *other* Exhortations, and Advice.

3 Let me exhort you, who are Children, to be thankful for the religious Instructions you receive, and carefully to improve them.

I have been here pleading your Cause, who scarcely know at present of how much Advantage *theie*

* In some extensive Parishes, where the Church is not large enough to contain the Inhabitants, the Ailes are so crowded, that the Children cannot be catechized there during divine Service. Consequently under such Circumstances the Minister is prevented from giving the public Instruction, as enjoined by the Rubric; but He may catechize them in the Vestry, or Chancel, either before, or after the Service, and do all in his Power to supply the Advantages of a more public Examination by this Attention to them in private.

these Things will hereafter be to you. I hope your Parents will be prevailed on to instruct you; and I desire and hope, that you will be thankful for their Instructions, carefully attend to them, and never be heedless, nor trifle, while they are reading, or speaking to you. You ought to be very serious in attending, and very diligent in learning, because they teach you the Things of God, the Way to be wise and holy, good and happy both here, and for ever. Let your Minister, when He applies to the important Work of catechising, observe, that you are attentive, diligent, and tractable. Let the Bible, * and religious Books be your Study, and Delight; and see, that you practise what you are taught, and know to be right, and good. Let those, who have enjoyed the Advantage of a religious Education, be careful to improve it, and ambitious to grow in Favor both with God, and Man. And let all, who are young, apply to God, as "the Guide of their Youth", and pray, that He would by his Spirit enlighten their Understandings, and form in their Hearts every good Temper

* It is the Advice of Dr. WATTS in his very useful little Treatise on the Education of Children, and Youth, (Page 210, the Duodecimo Edition, Price Two Shillings) "that the Memory of a Child should every Day be entrusted with something new; and that every Sunday at least, even in their youngest Years, they should learn by heart some Text of Scripture; chiefly that on which the Minister preaches: This will grow up in Time to a considerable Treasure of scriptural Knowledge, which will be of unspeakable Use to them in the Christian Life."

Temper, and Disposition, that they may be a Comfort to their Parents, a Credit to themselves, an Ornament to Society, and a Support to Religion.

Some FORMS of PRAYER.

As many *Parents*, who would pray for their *Children*, and as some *young Persons*, who would pray for *their Parents*, may find it difficult to express the immediate Sentiments, or Feelings of their Hearts in Words, the following Forms of Prayer, may perhaps be of some Assistance to them. Any Sentence may be added, omitted, or changed to suit their own particular Circumstances: For it is not to be supposed, that a *serious* Christian can, when praying in Secret, present to God all his peculiar Necessities in a few general Petitions pre-composed by another. Such *special* Sins, Mercies, and Wants may, and often do occur, as no human Sagacity can foresee, much less any human Forms provide for in a proper Manner.

“Prayer by Book (says Bishop Wilkins) floats for the most Part too much in Generalities, and is not particular enough for each several Occasion.” Those therefore, who have been accustomed to pray only by a Book, may at first add to their Prayers such Sentences, as their Circumstances may suggest. When they can do this readily they will be capable of making

ing a *Further* Progress; and thus gradually acquire *an Habit* of expressing their own *Sense* in their own *Language*; and of performing their *Devotions* in *private* without the *Help* of a *Book*. The *Ability* to pray thus *freely* is a very desirable and useful Attainment; but this cannot be accomplished without a diligent Use of our *Talents*, which will be improved by devout and constant Practice.

A Parent's Prayer for a *Child*, or *Children*.

Common Sense will dictate suitable *Alterations* to be made in this Prayer by a *Parent*, who has only one *Child*, or several *Children*; who is *Husband* or *Wife*, *Widower* or *Widow*.

O LORD, of Thee the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named. All my *personal*, *social* and *relative* Blessings proceed from Thee; and on Thee I have a *constant* and *necessary* Dependence for every Comfort I need, and desire. I praise Thee for thy *Goodness* to Me thine unworthy Servant, here presenting Myself before Thee, the God of all the Families on Earth. I thank Thee for that intimate, endearing, *conjugal* Relation, into which thy kind Providence hath brought Me. "Thou *setttest the Solitary in Families*," †—and "lo!

* In acquiring the *Habit* of praying in this Manner they may be greatly assisted by Dr. WATTS's *Prayers*, composed for the Use, and Imitation of Children; by Bishop Wilkins on the *Gift of Prayer*;—and by HENRY's *Method of Prayer*, [Tenth Edition.] † Psa. lxxviii. 6.

"lo! Children are an Heritage of the LORD.***
I praise Thee, that "thou hast not written me
"childless"† in the Earth, but hast been pleas-
ed to build up my House.

I thank Thee for that Affection and Tender-
ness, which thou hast implanted in the Hearts
of *Parents* towards their *Children*, which light-
ens their daily Labours, and softens their Cares.
I praise Thee, that all [*or some of*] the Children,
which thou hast graciously given to thy Servant,
have hitherto been spared, amidst the many Dis-
eases and Dangers, with which they have been
surrounded. I have devoted them to Thee in
Baptism, and did *then*, and do *now*, acknow-
ledge thy Right and Claim to them, as thy
Property, and the Disciples of thy Son.

I lament before Thee, that I have not been
more thankful for them, more diligent and se-
rious in my Attention to their Education, and
especially to their *best*, their *eternal* Interests.
I am ashamed, and humbled for my Ingratitude
to *Thee*, and for Want of a more rational and
christian Affection to *Them*. I intreat thy For-
giveness of my past Neglects and Failings, thro'
thy Son JESUS CHRIST, the great Sacrifice, and
Intercessor.

I beseech Thee, gracious God, to assist me
in their better Education for the future. Teach
Me by thy Word and Spirit more of the great
Principles, and Duties of Religion, that I may
wisely and faithfully teach *them* to my Children:

Enable

Enable Me to behave in every Respect, as a *christian* Parent ought to do, that they may learn Wisdom and Goodness by my *Example* also. Mercifully spare their Lives, establish their Health, and guard them from the many Dangers and Accidents, to which they are exposed. May they "remember Thee, their Creator, in the "Days of their Youth,"*—"flee youthful "Lusts;"† and exercise themselves unto Godliness."‡ Preserve them from the Allurements of this vain World, the Snares of evil Company, and the Temptations of Satan. May they *contemplate*, and *imitate* the Examples of *early* Piety contained in the Scriptures; especially *that* of thy holy Child JESUS; and, like *Him*, grow in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour both with God, and Man. May *thy* Grace restrain irregular Passion and Desire, every *dangerous* Disposition, and Inclination; and cherish and strengthen every *good* Disposition in them. Direct Me I intreat Thee in the Disposal, and Settlement of them in Life, and order every Event concerning them in the most kind, and gracious Manner. May they be Comforts to Me, Ornaments to Religion, and Blessings to the World, and the Church: And when I, their Parent, and the dear Companion of my Life, shall be gathered to our Fathers, may our Children fill up *our* Places honourably and usefully, be a Seed to serve the LORD, and transmit Religion to the *next* Generation.

These

* Eccles. xii. 1. † 2 Tim. ii. 22. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 7.

These Blessings for ourselves, and for them, I humbly ask in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, our Mediator, and Redeemer; to whom be Glory thro' all Generations for ever, and ever. Amen.

A PRAYER to be used by a young Person for his [or her] Parents.

O Lord God Almighty, who fillest Heaven, and Earth with thy Presence; look down with Pity on me in the Days of my Youth: I desire with all Seriousness and Reverence to look up to Thee, and address Thee, as "*my Father who art in Heaven*:" Thou art the Former of my Body, and Soul.

I thank Thee, that I was born in a *Christian Land*, and in a *Christian Family*. I thank Thee, that I have enjoyed many Advantages above others for gaining a Knowledge of Religion, my Duty, and the Way to be happy for ever.

I lament, and am sorry, that I have not better *improved* the Favours, which thou hast granted me; that I have not been more grateful, and obedient to my Parents, and more careful to remember and practise the Instructions I have received. I intreat thy Forgiveness of all my Sins, and Failings, thro' thy Son JESUS CHRIST, who died to save Sinners.—I beg thy *gracious Assistance*, that I may be disposed, and enabled to *attend* to the Instructions I receive, and *act* agreeably to them, LORD, make me

me sensible of my own Ignorance and Weakness, that I may be willing, and take Pains, to learn my Duty, to fear Thee from my Youth, and grow "*wise unto Salvation.*" Keep me from Idleness, Pride, and Passion. Preserve me from every Thing, which would grieve my Parents and Friends; or hinder my Improvement in Knowledge, and Goodness.— May I think of the Example of thy holy Child Jesus, and endeavour to be like Him, who was subject to his earthly Parents, and always did the Things, which pleased his heavenly Father. I intreat Thee to bless all my Relations, especially my dear Parents.

Spare their Lives; prosper their Affairs, and may I never say, or do, any Thing, that may offend them. May I so improve the Education they give me, that I may be a Comfort to them, be fitted for Usefulness in this World, and everlasting Happiness in the next. May I live in Peace, and Love with every Part of the Family, and be honest and kind to all. I humbly ask these Blessings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever liveth to pray for us in Heaven, and to whom be Glory and Praise for ever, and ever. Amen.

A Morning, and Evening Prayer for a Child from 4 or 5 to 9 or 10 Years old.

MERCIFUL God and Father, who art in Heaven, look down I beseech Thee on an helpless Child. Incline my Heart to remember,

ber, love, and serve Thee, and keep me from every evil Thought, Word, and Deed. May I grow in *Wisdom*, as in *Stature*, and be in Favor with *God*, and *Man*. Enable me to do to others, as I would they should do to me. Make me dutiful to my Parents, loving to all my Relations, obedient to my Teachers, and always in a Disposition to hear Advice, and receive Instruction. Preserve me this Day [*or this Night*] from every Danger, and grant all my humble Petitions for the Sake of Jesus Christ my Saviour, in whom alone I can be accepted. Amen.

¶ To this short Prayer may be added the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostle's important Benediction.

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name;—Thy Kingdom come;—Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.—Give us this Day our daily Bread;—And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us;—And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil:—For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with me (and with all, whom it is my Duty to remember in my Prayers) this Day [*or this Night*] and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

I have and have I not, and love me from
 the light of thought, word, and deed.
 I grow in wisdom, as in strength, and in
 love with God and man. I have a new
 world, and I will love it as I love
 the world I have known, loving to all my
 friends, obedient to my Father, and always in
 the position of heart, voice, and nerve in
 the world I have known. I have a new
 world, and I will love it as I love
 the world I have known, and I will love
 every friend, and every man, and every
 one for the sake of Jesus Christ my Saviour, in
 whom alone I can be successful. Amen.

and the ... is ...

[illegible]

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and
the Love of God, and the Communion of the
Holy Ghost, with us (and with all your
family) be ever increasing, and
abundant, and for evermore. Amen.



